

Sergeant Tejeda was the first Dominican killed in Iraq, a fact that history will rightfully record but in itself will not and cannot appreciate the pain of his loss to his two young daughters and mourning family.

At the time of his death, while the fatality count was still in its early stages, minorities constituted as high as 35 percent of the fatalities in the line of duty. Latinos, who comprise 8 percent of the total fighting force in Iraq, have incurred 16 percent of all intensive fighting deaths and 12 percent of the total fatalities during Operation Iraqi Freedom. These numbers are clear evidence of the disproportionate sacrifice being made in Iraq by Latinos and point out the level of their loyalty to their chosen country.

Riayan Tejeda was an outstanding young man with limitless potential, known for his studious nature and gentlemanly demeanor. He was a brave, selfless man of great conviction who fought and died for a nation of immigrants that today does not always appreciate the contributions and sacrifices made by new generations of outsiders pursuing better lives. Sergeant Tejeda, who had served in the Marine Corps for 8 years, was awarded U.S. citizenship only after his death and received the Silver Star for his valor in the line of fire. He proudly served our Nation in Thailand, South Korea, the Philippines, Australia, East Timor and Iraq. Sergeant Tejeda was the finest marksman in his regiment.

The naming of the U.S. Post Office in Washington Heights for Sergeant Tejeda will be received by the community with great pride and satisfaction. It is the least our country can do to honor the memory of Sergeant Tejeda's short and heroic life.

I extend my appreciation and sympathies to his parents Julio Cesar Tejeda and Carmen Rafaela Lora, his daughters Lorian and Miranda and his brothers Angel and Andre. I thank my colleagues for their support on this legislation.

TRANSPORTATION, TREASURY,  
AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES  
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2005

SPEECH OF

**HON. EARL POMEROY**

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 29, 2004*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5025) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation and Treasury, and independent agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005, and for other purposes.

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to say that I will be voting for H.R. 5025, the Fiscal Year 2005 Transportation, Treasury, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Bill in the hopes that this bill's serious problems can be fixed in conference negotiations with the Senate.

Unfortunately, the House and Senate Transportation Conferees have been unable to reach a deal on a transportation reauthorization bill. As a result, appropriated funds for unauthorized programs were struck from the proposed Fiscal Year 2005 Transportation, Treasury, and Independent Agencies Appropriations bill. Doing so made this bill woefully inad-

equated in terms of funding levels for various transportation agencies and programs including the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Amtrak, the Federal Transit Administration, and the Surface Transportation Board.

However, I am going to vote for the bill based on the assurances of the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Transportation, Treasury and Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee that funding for these critical accounts will be reinstated in conference. I hope that by furthering this bill, we can ensure that funding for North Dakota's significant transportation needs is secured.

I rise as well to express my opposition to the authorization of an automatic cost-of-living (COLA) pay increase for Members of Congress contained within H.R. 5025. A fiscally responsible Congress should have the opportunity to consider a pay raise independently of funding for important transportation projects in their districts. That is why I voted against the previous question on the rule to allow consideration of H.R. 5025 separate from this provision. It is my hope that Congress will take steps to ensure separate consideration for any increases in the future.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 29, 2004*

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, September 28, I was unavoidably detained for rollcall votes that day.

Had I been present I would have voted the following:

Rollcall 473, on the Motion to Instruct Conferees on H.R. 4200—Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2005, instructing conferees to adopt the bipartisan Senate-passed provisions on hate crimes, I would have voted "yea";

Rollcall 474, on the Motion to close portions of the Defense Authorization Act Conference from the public for national security reasons, I would have voted "yea"; and on

Rollcall 475, on S. 2363, to revise and extend the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, I would have voted "yea."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. J. GRESHAM BARRETT**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 29, 2004*

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I was delayed in my district yesterday in order to attend services for Staff Sergeant Tony B. Oleas, a soldier from Westminster, South Carolina who was killed while fighting for our country in Afghanistan on September 20th, and I unfortunately missed 3 recorded votes on the House floor.

I ask that the RECORD reflect that had I not been detained in my district, I would have voted "no" on rollcall vote No. 473 (Pelosi motion to instruct conferees to H.R. 4200, the Defense Authorization bill); "yes" on rollcall

vote No. 474 (motion to close portions of the conference on H.R. 4200, the Defense Authorization bill); and "no" on rollcall vote No. 475 (S. 2363 to revise and extend the Boys and Girls Club of America).

HONORING OLYMPIC GOLD  
MEDALIST OTIS HARRIS, JR.

**HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 29, 2004*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Edwards, Mississippi native, Olympic gold and silver medalist, Otis Harris, Jr. At this year's 2004 Olympic Games held in Athens, Greece, the track and field standout showcased his world class speed on the world's biggest stage.

Edwards, Mississippi's hometown hero, the son of Otis, Sr. and Cheryl Harris, began his track career at high school track powerhouse, Hinds Agricultural High School in Raymond, Mississippi. As Harris helped lead his high school team to three consecutive Class 2A State Championships, and in 1999 winning the 100m, 200m, and 400m State Championships respectively, he accumulated dozens of individual accolades leading to his acceptance of a track scholarship from the University of South Carolina.

Running his way through both the Gamecock and Southeastern Conference (SEC) record books in 2003, Otis took claim of SEC track titles in the 400m dash, as well as the 4 X 400m relay team, making these his signature events. Harris was deemed academically ineligible to participate in athletics during the 2004 collegiate season, causing him to briefly disappear from the Olympic track radar screen.

As Harris stunned many by qualifying for the Olympics in July 2004 in the 400m dash, he remained unfaltering as his dreams became realistic. On Monday, August 23, 2004, Otis settled into his familiar stance, only this time Olympic medals were up for grabs. Running the fastest time of his life (44.16), Otis garnered the Olympic silver medal in the 400m dash.

While still overwhelmed with the excitement of his first Olympic feat, Harris took the stage again five days later. This time Harris was starring in his other signature event, the 4 X 400m relay team which was favored to win the gold. Harris teamed with Derrick Brew (400m bronze), Jeremy Wariner (400m gold) and Darold Williamson. Harris ran the fastest leg of the four Americans, turning in a time of 43.28; the team ran 2:55.91, the best time in the world this year, bringing home the gold medals.

I commend Mr. Otis Harris, Jr. for his valiant triumphs at this year's Olympic Games. His efforts are buttressed by his resiliency through the seemingly unsteady foreign relations climate leading into the Games. Harris, as well as all of our Olympic athletes, showed true professionalism in serving as ambassadors and representing our nation on the global stage. May Otis continue to represent our nation with professionalism and may he continue to excel in his career.